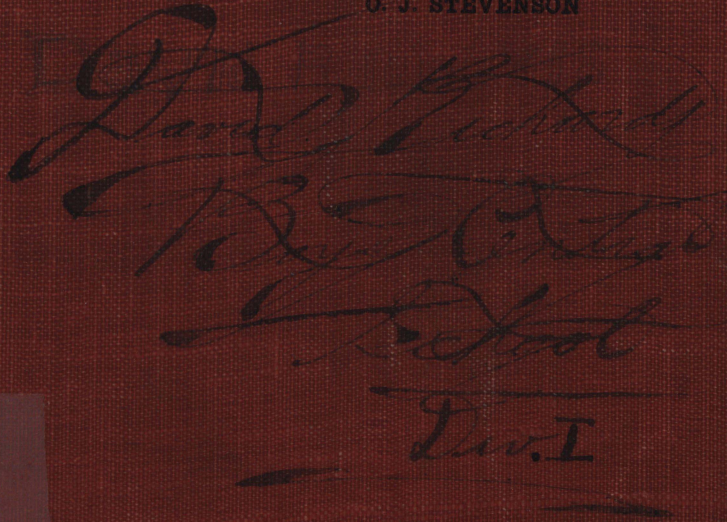
NARRATIVE AND LYRIC POEMS

THIRD SERIES

ANNOTATED BY
O. J. STEVENSON



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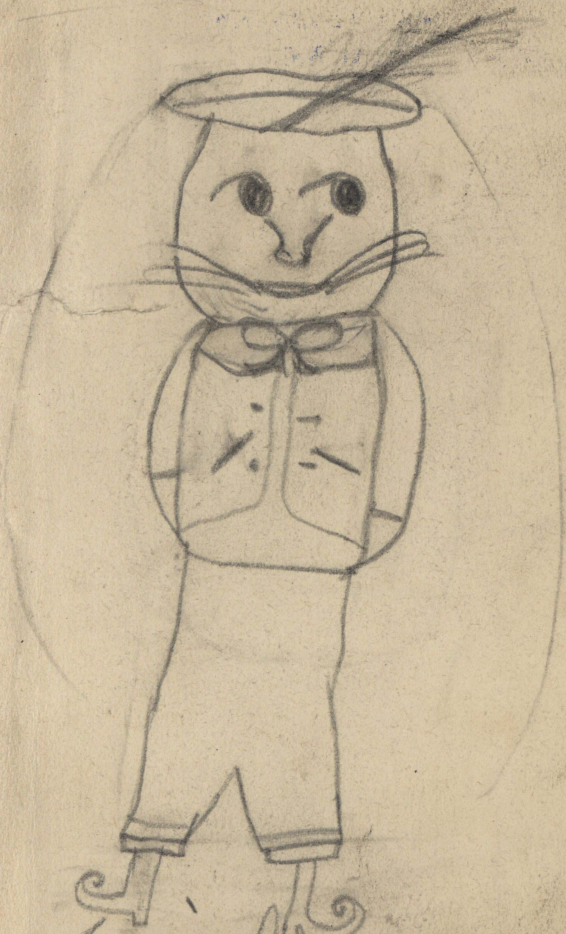

Sailor

NARRATIVE AND LYRIC

POEMS

(Third Series)

WITH ANNOTATIONS BY

O. J. STEVENSON, M.A., D.PAED.

Professor of English, Ontario Agricultural College

BRITISH COLUMBIA EDITION

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CONTENTS

		PAGE
The Meeting of the Waters	*Moore*	1
Jock O' Hazeldean	*Scott*	2
Alice Brand	*Scott*	3
The Solitary Reaper	*Wordsworth*	7
The Island of the Scots	*Aytoun*	8
The Builders	*Longfellow*	15
Rosabelle	*Scott*	17
Boadicea	*Cowper*	19
Edinburgh after Flodden	*Aytoun*	21
Hervé Riel	*Browning*	27
The Skeleton in Armour	*Longfellow*	33
Boot and Saddle	*Browning*	39
Robin Hood and Allen-a-Dale	*Unknown*	40
Chevy Chase	*Unknown*	44

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NARRATIVE AND LYRIC POEMS

THE MEETING OF THE WATERS.

THERE is not in the wide world a valley so sweet
As that vale in whose bosom the bright waters meet!
Oh! the last rays of feeling and life must depart
Ere the bloom of that valley shall fade from my heart.

Yet it *was* not that nature had shed o'er the scene
Her purest of crystal and brightest of green;
'Twas *not* the soft magic of streamlet or hill,
Oh! no—it was something more exquisite still.

'Twas that friends, the beloved of my bosom, were near,
Who made every dear scene of enchantment more dear,
And who felt how the best charms of nature improve,
When we see them reflected from looks that we love.

Sweet vale of Avoca![1] how calm could I rest
In thy bosom of shade with the friends I love best,
Where the storms that we feel in this cold world should cease,
And our hearts, like thy waters, be mingled in peace!

—*Moore.*

[1] **Avoca.** A valley and river in the County of Wicklow, Ireland. The name signifies "The Meeting of the Waters."

JOCK O' HAZELDEAN.

"Why weep ye by the tide, ladie?
Why weep ye by the tide?
I'll wed ye to my youngest son,
And ye sall[1] be his bride:
And ye sall be his bride, ladie,
Sae comely to be seen"—
But aye she loot[2] the tears down fa'
For Jock o' Hazeldean.

"Now let this wilfu' grief be done,
And dry that cheek so pale;
Young Frank is chief of Errington,
And lord of Langley-dale;
His step is first in peaceful ha',
His sword in battle keen"—
But aye she loot the tears down fa'
For Jock o' Hazeldean.

"A chain of gold ye sall not lack,
Nor braid to bind your hair;
Nor mettled hound, nor managed[3] hawk,
Nor palfrey fresh and fair;
And you, the foremost o' them a'
Shall ride our forest-queen"—
But aye she loot the tears down fa'
For Jock o' Hazeldean.

The kirk was deck'd at morning-tide,
The tapers glimmer'd fair;
The priest and bridegroom wait the bride,
And dame and knight are there.
They sought her baith by bower and ha'.
The ladie was not seen!
She's o'er the border, and awa'
Wi' Jock o' Hazeldean! —*Scott.*

[1] **sail.** shall. [2] **loot.** let. [3] **managed.** trained.

ALICE BRAND.

Merry it is in the good greenwood,
When the mavis and merle[1] are singing,
When the deer sweeps by and the hounds are in cry,
And the hunter's horn is ringing.

"O Alice Brand, my native land
Is lost for love of you;
And we must hold by wood and wold,[2]
As outlaws wont to do.

"O Alice, 'twas all for thy locks so bright,
And 'twas all for thine eyes so blue,
That on the night of our luckless flight
Thy brother bold I slew.

"Now must I teach to hew the beech
The hand that held the glaive,[3]
For leaves to spread our lowly bed,
And stakes to fence our cave.

"And for vest of pall,[4] thy fingers small,
That wont on harp to stray,
A cloak must shear from the slaughtered deer,
To keep the cold away."

"O Richard! if my brother died,
'Twas but a fatal chance;
For darkling[5] was the battle tried,
And fortune sped the lance.

---

[1] **mavis and merle.** thrush and blackbird.
[2] **wold.** hilly, open country.
[3] **glaive.** sword.
[4] **pall.** A rich cloth from which mantles of noblemen were made.
[5] **darkling.** In the dark.

"If pall and vair[6] no more I wear,
Nor thou the crimson sheen,
As warm, we 'll say, is the russet gray,
As gay the forest-green.

"And, Richard, if our lot be hard,
And lost thy native land,
Still Alice has her own Richard,
And he his Alice Brand."

'T is merry, 't is merry, in good greenwood;
So blithe Lady Alice is singing;
On the beech's pride, and oak's brown side,
Lord Richard's axe is ringing.

Up spoke the moody Elfin King,[7]
Who woned[8] within the hill,—
Like wind in the porch of a ruined church,
His voice was ghostly shrill.

"Why sounds yon stroke on beech and oak,
Our moonlight circle's[9] screen?
Or who comes here to chase the deer,
Beloved of our Elfin Queen?
Or who may dare on wold to wear
The fairies' fatal green?[10]

---

[6] **vair.** The fur of the squirrel.

[7] **Elfin King.** King of the fairies.

[8] **woned.** dwelt.

[9] **circle.** dance.

[10] **fairies' fatal green.** The dress of the fairies was green and they were angered when mortals dared to wear garments of that colour.

"Up, Urgan, up! to yon mortal hie,
For thou wert christened[11] man;
For cross or sign thou wilt not fly,
For muttered word or ban.[12]

"Lay on him the curse of the withered heart,
The curse of the sleepless eye
Till he wish and pray that his life would part,
Nor yet find leave to die."

'Tis merry, 'tis merry, in good greenwood
Though the birds have stilled their singing;
The evening blaze doth Alice raise,
And Richard is fagots bringing.

Up Urgan starts, that hideous dwarf,
Before Lord Richard stands,
And, as he crossed and blessed himself,
"I fear not sign," quoth the grisly[13] elf,
"That is made with bloody hands."

But out then spoke she, Alice Brand,
That woman void of fear,—
"And if there's blood upon his hand,
'Tis but the blood of deer."

"Now loud thou liest, thou bold of mood!
It cleaves unto his hand,
The stain of thine own kindly blood,[13]
The blood of Ethert Brand."

---

[11] **christened.** Those who had been baptized were, according to mediæval belief, supposed to enjoy special advantages or privileges.

[12] **ban.** curse.

[13] **grisly.** horrible; hideous.

[13] **kindly blood.** The blood of your kindred.

Then forward stepped she, Alice Brand,
And made the holy sign,—
"And if there's blood on Richard's hand,
A spotless hand is mine.

"And I conjure[14] thee, demon elf,
By Him whom demons fear,
To show us whence thou art thyself,
And what thine errand here?"

"'Tis merry, 'tis merry, in Fairy-land,
When fairy birds are singing,
When the court doth ride by their monarch's side,
With bit and bridle ringing:

"And gayly shines the Fairy-land—
But all is glistening show
Like the idle gleam that December's beam
Can dart on ice and snow.

"And fading, like that varied gleam,
Is our inconstant shape,
Who now like knight and lady seem,
And now like dwarf and ape.

"It was between the night and day,
When the Fairy King has power,
That I sunk down in a sinful fray,
And 'twixt life and death was snatched away
To the joyless Elfin bower.

"But wist[15] I of a woman bold,
Who thrice my brow durst sign,[16]
I might regain my mortal mould,
As fair a form as thine."

[14] **conjure.** Call upon by oath. Distinguished from conjure (pr. kúnjur), meaning "to influence by magic."

[15] **wist I.** If I knew.

[16] **sign.** Make the sign of the cross upon my brow.

She crossed him once—she crossed him twice—
That lady was so brave;
The fouler grew his goblin hue,
The darker grew the cave.

She crossed him thrice, that lady bold;
He rose beneath her hand,
The fairest knight on Scottish mould,
Her brother, Ethert Brand!

Merry it is in good greenwood,
When the mavis and merle are singing,
But merrier were they in Dunfermline[17] gray,
When all the bells were ringing.

—*Scott.*

[17] **Dunfermline.** A town, about twenty miles from Edinburgh.

THE SOLITARY REAPER.

Behold her, single in the field,
Yon solitary Highland lass!
Reaping and singing by herself.
Stop here, or gently pass!
Alone she cuts and binds the grain
And sings a melancholy strain.
Oh, listen! for the vale profound
Is overflowing with the sound.

No nightingale did ever chant
So sweetly to reposing bands
Of travellers in some shady haunt
Among Arabian sands:
No sweeter voice was ever heard
In spring-time from the cuckoo-bird
Breaking the silence of the seas
Among the farthest Hebrides.

Will no one tell me what she sings?
Perhaps the plaintive numbers flow
For old, unhappy, far-off things,
And battles long ago.
Or is it some more humble lay,
Familiar matter of to-day?
Some natural sorrow, loss, or pain,
That has been, and may be again?

Whate'er the theme, the maiden sang
As if her song could have no ending;
I saw her singing at her work,
And o'er the sickle bending;—
I listen'd motionless and still;
And, as I mounted up the hill,
The music in my heart I bore,
Long after it was heard no more.

—*Wordsworth.*

THE ISLAND OF THE SCOTS.

The Rhine is running deep and red, the island lies before,—
"Now is there one of all the host will dare to venture o'er?
For not alone the river's sweep might make a brave man quail;
The foe are on the further side, their shot comes fast as hail.
God help us, if the middle isle we may not hope to win;
Now is there any of the host will dare to venture in?"
"The ford is deep, the banks are steep, the island-shore lies wide;
Nor man nor horse could stem its force, or reach the further side.
See there! amidst the willow-boughs the serried[1] bayonets gleam;

---

[1] **serried.** crowded.

They've flung their bridge,—they've won the isle; the foe
have cross'd the stream!
Their volley flashes sharp and strong,—by all the saints!
I trow
There never yet was soldier born could force that passage
now!"

So spoke the bold French Mareschal[2] with him who led
the van,
Whilst rough and red before their view the turbid river ran.
Nor bridge nor boat had they to cross the wild and swollen
Rhine,
And thundering on the other bank far stretch'd the German
line.
Hard by there stood a swarthy man, was leaning on his sword,
And a sadden'd smile lit up his face as he heard the Captain's
word.
"I've seen a wilder stream ere now than that which rushes
there;
I've stemm'd a heavier torrent yet and never thought to
dare.
If German steel be sharp and keen, is ours not strong and
true?
There may be danger in the deed, but there is honour too."

The old lord in his saddle turn'd, and hastily he said,
"Hath bold Duguesclin's[3] fiery heart awaken'd from the dead?
Thou art the leader of the Scots,—now well and sure I
know,
That gentle blood in dangerous hour ne'er yet ran cold nor
slow;

---

[2] **Mareschal.** Marshal, an officer of the highest rank in the French army.

[3] **Duguesclin.** A noted French commander, famous for his campaigns against the English in the 14th century.

And I have seen ye in the fight do all that mortal may:
If honour is the boon ye seek, it may be won this day,—
The prize is in the middle isle, there lies the adventurous way,
And armies twain are on the plain, the daring deed to see,—
Now ask thy gallant company if they will follow thee!"

Right gladsome look'd the Captain then, and nothing did he say,
But he turn'd him to his little band, O, few, I ween, were they!
The relics of the bravest force that ever fought in fray.
No one of all that company but bore a gentle name,
Not one whose fathers had not stood in Scotland's fields of fame.
All they had march'd with great Dundee[4] to where he fought and fell,
And in the deadly battle-strife had venged their leader well;
And they had bent the knee to earth when every eye was dim,
As o'er their hero's buried corpse they sang the funeral hymn;
And they had trod the Pass[5] once more, and stoop'd on either side,
To pluck the heather from the spot where he had dropp'd and died;
And they had bound it next their hearts, and ta'en a last farewell
Of Scottish earth and Scottish sky, where Scotland's glory fell.
Then went they forth to foreign lands like bent and broken men,
Who leave their dearest hope behind, and may not turn again.

---

[4] **Dundee.** John Graham of Claverhouse, Viscount Dundee, a Scottish soldier. He raised a body of Highlanders in 1689 to fight for James II against William of Orange. At the battle of Killecrankie (1689) he was mortally wounded.

[5] **The Pass.** The Pass of Killecrankie.

"The stream," he said, "is broad and deep, and stubborn is the foe,—
Yon island-strength is guarded well,—say, brothers, will ye go?
From home and kin for many a year our steps have wander'd wide,
And never may our bones be laid our fathers' graves beside.
No children have we to lament, no wives to wail our fall;
The traitor's and the spoiler's hand have reft our hearths of all.
But we have hearts, and we have arms, as strong to will and dare
As when our ancient banners flew within the northern air.
Come, brothers! let me name a spell shall rouse your souls again,
And send the old blood bounding free through pulse and heart and vein.
Call back the days of bygone years,—be young and strong once more;
Think yonder stream, so stark and red, is one we've cross'd before.

Rise, hill and glen! rise, crag and wood! rise up on either hand,—
Again upon the Garry's[6] banks, on Scottish soil we stand!
Again I see the tartans[7] wave, again the trumpets ring;
Again I hear our leader's call: 'Upon them for the King!'
Stay'd we behind that glorious day for roaring flood or linn?[8]
The soul of Græme is with us still,—now, brothers, will ye in?"
No stay,—no pause. With one accord, they grasp'd each other's hand,
Then plunged into the angry flood, that bold and dauntless band.

---

[6]Garry. A river in Perthshire, Scotland.
[7]tartan. A Scotch plaid.
[8]linn. A waterfall.

High flew the spray above their heads, yet onward still they bore,
Midst cheer, and shout, and answering yell, and shot, and cannon-roar,—
"Now, by the Holy Cross! I swear, since earth and sea began,
Was never such a daring deed essay'd by mortal man!"

Thick blew the smoke across the stream, and faster flash'd the flame:
The water plash'd in hissing jets as ball and bullet came.
Yet onward push'd the Cavaliers all stern and undismay'd,
With thousand armèd foes before, and none behind to aid.
Once, as they near'd the middle stream, so strong the torrent swept,
That scarce that long and living wall their dangerous footing kept.
Then rose a warning cry behind, a joyous shout before:
"The current's strong,—the way is long,—they'll never reach the shore!
See, see! they stagger in the midst, they waver in their line!
Fire on the madmen! break their ranks, and whelm them in the Rhine!"

Have you seen the tall trees swaying when the blast is sounding shrill,
And the whirlwind reels in fury down the gorges of the hill?
How they toss their mighty branches, struggling with the tempest's shock;
How they keep their place of vantage, cleaving firmly to the rock?
Even so the Scottish warriors held their own against the river;
Though the water flashed around them, not an eye was seen to quiver;

Though the shot flew sharp and deadly, not a man relax'd his hold;
For their hearts were big and thrilling with the mighty thoughts of old.
One word was spoken among them, and through the ranks it spread,—
"Remember our dead Claverhouse!" was all the Captain said.
Then, sternly bending forward, they wrestled on a while,
Until they clear'd the heavy stream, then rush'd toward the isle.

The German heart is stout and true, the German arm is strong;
The German foot goes seldom back where armed foemen throng.
But never had they faced in field so stern a charge before,
And never had they felt the sweep of Scotland's broad claymore.[9]
Not fiercer pours the avalanche adown the steep incline,
That rises o'er the parent springs of rough and rapid Rhine,—
Scarce swifter shoots the bolt from heaven, than came the Scottish band
Right up against the guarded trench, and o'er it, sword in hand.
In vain their leaders forward press,—they meet the deadly brand!

O lonely island of the Rhine,—Where seed was never sown,
What harvest lay upon thy sands, by those strong reapers thrown?
What saw the winter moon that night, as, struggling through the rain,
She pour'd a wan and fitful light on marsh, and stream, and plain?

[9] **claymore.** The heavy broadsword used by the Highlanders.

A dreary spot with corpses strewn, and bayonets glistening round;
A broken bridge, a stranded boat, a bare and batter'd mound;
And one huge watch-fire's kindled pile, that sent its quivering glare
To tell the leaders of the host the conquering Scots were there.

And did they twine the laurel-wreath,[10] for those who fought so well?
And did they honour those who liv'd, and weep for those who fell?
What meed of thanks was given to them let agèd annals tell.
Why should they bring the laurel-wreath,—why crown the cup with wine?
It was not Frenchmen's blood that flow'd so freely on the Rhine,—
A stranger band of beggar'd men had done the venturous deed;
The glory was to France alone, the danger was their meed.
And what cared they for idle thanks from foreign prince and peer?
What virtue had such honey'd words the exiled heart to cheer?
What matter'd it that men should vaunt, and loud and fondly swear
That higher feat of chivalry was never wrought elsewhere?
They bore within their breast the grief that fame can never heal,—
The deep, unutterable woe which none save exiles feel.
Their hearts were yearning for the land they ne'er might see again,—
For Scotland's high and heather'd hills, for mountains, loch and glen—

[10] **laurel-wreath.** The laurel is an evergreen shrub found in parts of Europe. A wreath of laurel was a mark of distinction or honour.

For those who haply lay at rest beyond the distant sea,
Beneath the green and daisied turf where they would gladly be!
Long years went by. The lonely isle in Rhine's tempestuous flood
Has ta'en another name from those who bought it with their blood:
And, though the legend does not live,—for legends lightly die—
The peasant, as he sees the stream in winter rolling by,
And foaming o'er its channel-bed between him and the spot
Won by the warriors of the sword, still calls that deep and dangerous ford
The Passage of the Scot.

—*Aytoun.*

THE BUILDERS.

All are architects of Fate,
Working in these walls of Time;[1]
Some with massive deeds and great,
Some with ornaments of rhyme.

Nothing useless is, or low;
Each thing in its place is best;
And what seems but idle show
Strengthens and supports the rest.

For the structure that we raise,
Time is with materials filled;
Our to-days and yesterdays
Are the blocks with which we build.

[1] The figure seems to be that of a great edifice (Time) within which we are building stairways (our lives) which enable us to rise to higher levels.

Truly shape and fashion these;
Leave no yawning gaps between;
Think not, because no man sees,
Such things will remain unseen.

In the elder days of Art,
Builders wrought with greatest care
Each minute and unseen part;
For the Gods see everywhere.

Let us do our work as well,
Both the unseen and the seen;
Make the house, where Gods may dwell,
Beautiful, entire and clean.

Else our lives are incomplete,
Standing in these walls of Time,
Broken stairways, where the feet
Stumble as they seek to climb.

Build to-day, then, strong and sure,
With a firm and ample base;
And ascending and secure
Shall to-morrow find its place.

Thus alone can we attain
To those turrets, where the eye
Sees the world as one vast plain,
And one boundless reach of sky.[2]

—*Longfellow.*

[2] We gain a broader outlook on life.

ROSABELLE.

The ballad of Rosabelle is taken from Scott's *Lay of The Last Minstrel.* It is sung at a wedding feast by the bard of the St. Clairs, to whom belonged the castle of Roslin mentioned in the story.

Oh listen, listen, ladies gay! [1]
No haughty feat of arms I tell;
Soft is the note and sad the lay
That mourns the lovely Rosabelle.

"Moor, moor the barge, ye gallant crew!
And, gentle ladye, deign to stay!
Rest thee in Castle Ravensheuch, [2]
Nor tempt the stormy firth to-day.

"The blackening wave is edged with white;
To inch[3] and rock the sea-mews [4] fly;
The fishers have heard the Water-Sprite, [5]
Whose screams forbode that wreck is nigh.

"Last night the gifted Seer did view
A wet shroud swathed round ladye gay;
Then stay thee, Fair, in Ravensheuch;
Why cross the gloomy firth to-day?" —

"'Tis not because Lord Lindesay's heir
To-night at Roslin [6] leads the ball,
But that my layde-mother there
Sits lonely in her castle-hall.

1. **ladies gay.** The ladies at the wedding feast, to whom the bard is singing

2. **Ravensheuch.** Literally, Raven's Crag. A strong castle, now in ruins, situated on the Firth of Forth. It was for a long time occupied by the barons of Roslin.

3. **inch.** Island. 4. **sea-mews.** Sea-gulls.

5. **Water-Sprite.** Water Spirit.

6. **Roslin.** A castle and chapel situated a few miles from the Firth of Forth.

"'Tis not because the ring[7] they ride,
And Lindesay at the ring rides well,
But that my sire the wine will chide
If 'tis not fill'd by Rosabelle."—

O'er Roslin all that dreary night
A wondrous blaze[8] was seen to gleam;
'Twas broader than the watch-fire's light,
And redder than the bright moonbeam.

It glared on Roslin's castled rock,
It ruddied all the copse-wood glen;
'Twas seen from Dryden's groves of oak,[9]
And seen from cavern'd Hawthornden,

Seem'd all on fire that chapel proud,
Where Roslin's chiefs uncoffin'd lie,
Each Baron, for a sable shroud,
Sheathed in his iron panoply.[10]

Seem'd all on fire, within, around,
Deep sacristy[11] and altar's pale;[12]
Shone every pillar foliage-bound,[13]
And glimmer'd all the dead men's mail.

Blazed battlement and pinnet high,[14]
Blazed every rose-carved buttress fair—[15]
So still they blaze, when fate is nigh
The lordly line of high Saint Clair.[16]

---

7. **the ring.** As a test of skill, the knights, when riding at full speed attempted to carry off on the end of a lance a ring suspended from a beam.

8. **blaze.** Roslin Chapel was said to appear on fire previous to the death of one of the family of St. Clair.

9. **Dryden; Hawthornden.** Places in the neighbourhood of Roslin.

10. **panoply.** A full suit of armour.

11. **sacristy.** The vestry; said to be "deep" because it extended far back.

12. **altar's pale.** The space enclosed by the altar railing.

13. **foliage-bound.** Carved with leaves and flowers.

14. **pinnet.** Pinnacle.

15. **rose-carved buttress.** "Among the profuse carvings on the pillars and buttresses, the rose is frequently introduced, in allusion to the name (Roslin), with which, however, the flower has no connection." (Scott).

16. **St. Clair.** The St. Clairs were a noble family who ruled over the earldom of Orkney and who held, besides, possessions in the Lowlands.

There are twenty of Roslin's barons bold
Lie buried within that proud chapelle
Each one the holy vault doth hold—
But the sea holds lovely Rosabelle!

And each Saint Clair was buried there
With candle, with book, and with knell;
But the sea-caves rung, and the wild winds sung
The dirge of lovely Rosabelle!

—*Scott*

BOADICEA.

Boadicea was the wife of Prasutagus, king of the Iceni, a warlike Celtic people who occupied the south-east corner of Britain which now forms the counties of Norfolk and Suffolk. After the death of Prasutagus, about the year 60, the Roman officials deprived Boadicea and her family of power and treated them as slaves. As a result of this harsh treatment, during the absence of Suetonius, the Roman governor, the Iceni revolted under Boadicea, and seventy thousand Romans were massacred. Upon his return, Suetonius gathered a Roman army and inflicted a crushing defeat on the Iceni and their allies. Eighty thousand Britons were slain, while the Roman loss was only four hundred. In despair at the disaster which had overtaken her people Boadicea poisoned herself.

When the British warrior-queen
Bleeding from the Roman rods,[1]
Sought, with an indignant mien,
Counsel of her country's gods,[2]

Sage, beneath a spreading oak[3]
Sat the Druid, hoary chief,[4]
Every burning word he spoke,
Full of rage, and full of grief:

1. **the Roman rods.** According to tradition, after the death of her husband Prasutagus, Boadicea was scourged by the Romans.

2. **her country's Gods.** Among the Celts, the Druid priests were all-powerful. They not only performed the rites of their religion and offered up sacrifices, but they were also the teachers, judges, and law-givers of the Celtic people.

3. **oak.** The oak was held in special reverence by the Druid priests.

4. **hoary chief.** Among the Druids there was always one chief priest who was supreme.

"Princess, if our aged eyes
Weep upon thy matchless wrongs,
Tis because resentment ties
All the terrors of our tongues.

"Rome shall perish; write that word
In the blood that she has spilt;
Perish, hopeless and abhorr'd,
Deep in ruin as in guilt.

"Rome, for empire far renown'd,
Tramples on a thousand states;
Soon her pride shall kiss the ground—
Hark! the Gaul[5] is at her gates!

"Other Romans[6] shall arise,
Heedless of a soldier's name;
Sounds,[7] not arms, shall win the prize,
Harmony the path to fame.

"Then, the progeny[8] that springs
From the forests of our land,
Armed with thunder, clad with wings,
Shall a wider world command.

"Regions Cæsar never knew,[9]
Thy posterity shall sway;[10]
Where his eagles never flew,
None invincible as they."

---

5. **the Gaul.** The fall of the Roman Empire dates from the end of the fourth century when the Goths, comprising various Teutonic tribes, began to overrun the outlying provinces. It was natural that the Celtic priest should predict that the Gauls, or Celts, should bring about the downfall of Rome, but in reality Gaul, in common with the rest of the Empire, was overrun by the Goths.

6. **other Romans.** The modern Italians.

7. **sounds, not arms.** In the eighteenth century when this poem was written, Italy was famous for its music, and the composers of other countries in Europe wrote almost wholly in the Italian style.

8. **the progeny.....land.** War-vessels in the eighteenth century were constructed chiefly of oak.

9. **regions Cæsar never knew.** America and Australia, for instance.

10. **thy posterity.** The Anglo-Saxon peoples are not the "posterity" of the ancient Britons; but the Celts too have had their share in founding new colonies.

Such the bard's prophetic words,
Pregnant with celestial fire ;[11]
Bending as he swept the chords
Of his sweet but awful lyre.

She, with all a monarch's pride,
Felt them in her bosom glow ;
Rushed to battle, fought, and died ;[12]
Dying, hurled them at the foe.

"Ruffians, pitiless as proud,
Heaven awards the vengeance due ;
Empire is on us bestowed,
Shame and ruin wait for you!"

—*Cowper.*

11. **pregnant with celestial fire.** Filled with inspiration.
12. **died.** In reality Boadicea did not die in battle.

EDINBURGH AFTER FLODDEN

James IV of Scotland came to the throne in 1488. In the year 1503 he married Margaret Tudor, the daughter of Henry VII of England, and for the next six years, until the death of Henry in 1509 there was peace between the two kingdoms. But when Henry VIII came to the throne disputes arose which finally led to war. In 1513 James crossed the English border with a force of 30,000 men and a great quantity of artillery. He was met by the English under the Earl of Surrey at Flodden, a ridge of the Cheviots, and he suffered a crushing defeat. James himself was killed, and the Scots are said to have lost ten thousand men. Among the slain were twelve earls, thirteen lords, and some fifty knights and gentlemen. Almost every family in Scotland suffered from the disaster, and it was many years before the Scottish people were able to rally from this crushing blow.

News of battle! News of battle!
Hark! 'tis ringing down the street ;
And the archways and the pavement
Bear the clang of hurrying feet.
News of battle! who hath brought it?
News of triumph! who should bring
Tidings from our noble army,
Greetings from our gallant king?

All last night we watched the beacons
Blazing on the hills afar,
Each one bearing, as it kindled,
Message of the opened war.
All night long the northern streamers
Shot across the trembling sky;
Fearful lights, that never beckon
Save when kings and heroes die.

News of battle! who hath brought it?
All are thronging to the gate;
"Warder—warder! open quickly!
Man—is this a time to wait?"
And the heavy gates are opened:
Then a murmur long and loud,
And a cry of fear and wonder
Bursts from out the bending crowd,
For they see in battered harness
Only one hard-stricken[1] man;
And his weary steed is wounded,
And his cheek is pale and wan:
Spearless hangs a bloody banner
In his weak and drooping hand—
What! can this be Randolph Murray,
Captain of the city band?

Round him crush the people, crying,
"Tell us all—oh, tell us true!
Where are they who went to battle,
Randolph Murray, sworn to you?
Where are they our brothers,—children?
Have they met the English foe?

1. **hard-stricken.** Worn with fighting and with hard riding.

Why art thou alone, unfollowed?
Is it weal, or is it woe?"

Like a corpse the grisly[2] warrior
Looks out from his helm of steel;
But no words he speaks in answer—
Only with his armèd heel
Chides his weary steed, and onward
Up the city streets they ride;
Fathers, sisters, mothers, children,
Shrieking, praying by his side.
"By the God that made thee, Randolph!
Tell us what mischance has come."
Then he lifts his riven banner,
And the asker's voice is dumb.

The elders of the city
Have met within their hall—
The men whom good King James had charged
To watch the tower and wall.
"Your hands are weak with age," he said,
"Your hearts are stout and true;
So bide ye in the Maiden Town,
While others fight for you.
My trumpet from the border side
Shall send a blast so clear,
That all who wait within the gate
That stirring sound may hear.
Or if it be the will of Heaven
That back I never come,
And if, instead of Scottish shouts,
Ye hear the English drum,—

2. **grisly.** Fearful to look upon.

Then let the warning bells ring out,
Then gird you to the fray,
Then man the walls like burghers stout,
And fight while fight you may.
'Twere better that in fiery flame
The roof should thunder down,
Than that the foot of foreign foe
Should trample in the town!"[3]

Then in came Randolph Murray,—
His step was slow and weak,
And, as he doffed his dinted helm,
The tears ran down his cheek:
They fell upon his corselet,[4]
And on his mailèd hand,
As he gazed around him wistfully,
Leaning sorely on his brand.
And none who then beheld him
But straight were smote with fear,
For a bolder and a sterner man
Had never couched a spear.
They knew so sad a messenger
Some ghastly news must bring,
And all of them were fathers,
And their sons were with the King.

And up then rose the Provost—[5]
A brave old man was he,
Of ancient name, and knightly fame,
And chivalrous degree.

3. The English suffered so severely in the battle that they were unable to invade Scotland.
4. **corselet.** Body armour.
5. **Provost.** Chief magistrate, mayor.

Oh, woeful now was the old man's look,
And he spake right heavily—
"Now, Randolph, tell thy tidings,
However sharp they be!
Woe is written on thy visage,
Death is looking from thy face:
Speak!—though it be of overthrow,
It cannot be disgrace!"

Right bitter was the agony
That wrung that soldier proud:
Thrice did he strive to answer,
And thrice he groaned aloud.
Then he gave the riven banner
To the old man's shaking hand,
Saying—"That is all I bring ye
From the bravest of the land!
Ay! ye may look upon it—
It was guarded well and long,
By your brothers and your children,
By the valiant and the strong.
One by one they fell around it,
As the archers laid them low,
Grimly dying, still unconquered,[6]
With their faces to the foe.
Ay! ye may well look upon it—
There is more than honour there,
Else, be sure, I had not brought it
From the field of dark despair.
Never yet was royal banner
Steeped in such a costly dye;

6. The Scots fought fiercely till nightfall, and it was not until the morning that Surrey knew that he had won the victory.

It hath lain upon a bosom
Where no other shroud shall lie.
Sirs! I charge you, keep it holy,
Keep it as a sacred thing,
For the stain you see upon it
Was the life-blood of your King!

Woe, and woe, and lamentation!
What a piteous cry was there!
Widows, maidens, mothers, children,
Shrieking, sobbing in despair!
"Oh the blackest day for Scotland
That she ever knew before!
Oh our king! the good and noble,
Shall we see him never more?
Woe to us, and woe to Scotland!
Oh our sons, our sons and men!
Surely some have 'scaped the Southron,
Surely some will come again!"

Till the oak that fell last winter
Shall uprear its shattered stem—
Wives and mothers of Dunedin—[7]
Ye may look in vain for them!

—*Aytoun.*

7. **Dunedin.** A poetical name for Edinburgh. Dun means "a hill".

HERVÉ RIEL.

This poem was written by Browning in 1871, the year after the Franco-German war and the £100 which he received for it was contributed to the relief of the people of Paris who had suffered from the siege. The Admiralty records prove that the story is founded on fact.

I.

On the sea and at the Hogue,[1] sixteen hundred ninety-two,
Did the English fight the French,—woe to France!
And, the thirty-first of May, helter-skelter thro' the blue,
Like a crowd of frightened porpoises a shoal of sharks pursue,
Came crowding ship on ship to St. Malo on the Rance,[2]
With the English fleet in view.

II.

'Twas the squadron that escaped, with the victor in full chase;
First and foremost of the drove, in his great ship, Damfreville;
Close on him fled, great and small,
Twenty-two good ships in all;
And they signalled to the place
"Help the winners of a race!
Get us guidance, give us harbour, take us quick—or, quicker still,
Here's the English can and will!"

III.

Then the pilots of the place put out brisk and leapt on board;
"Why, what hope or chance have ships like these to pass?" laughed they:

1. **the Hogue.** Following the Revolution of 1688, the French planned an invasion of England in support of James II; but in 1692 the combined English and Dutch fleets defeated the French near La Hogue, a bay on the north-west coast of France.

2. **the Rance.** The river at the mouth of which the town of St. Malo is situated.

"Rocks to starboard, rocks to port,[3] all the passage scarred and scored,—
Shall the 'Formidable' here with her twelve and eighty guns
Think to make the river-mouth by the single narrow way,
Trust to enter—where 'tis ticklish for a craft of twenty tons,
And with flow at full beside?
Now, 'tis slackest ebb of tide.
Reach the mooring? Rather say,
While rock stands or water runs,
Not a ship will leave the bay!"

IV.

Then was called a council straight.
Brief and bitter the debate:
"Here's the English at our heels; would you have them take in tow
All that's left us of the fleet, linked together stern and bow,
For a prize to Plymouth Sound?
Better run the ships aground!"
(Ended Damfreville his speech).
"Not a minute more to wait!
Let the Captains all and each
Shove ashore, then blow up, burn the vessels on the beach!
France must undergo her fate.

V.

Give the word!" But no such word
Was ever spoke or heard;
For up stood, for out stepped, for in struck amid all these
—A Captain? A Lieutenant? A Mate—first, second, third?

3. **port.** The larboard or left side of the vessel.

No such man of mark, and meet
With his betters to compete!
But a simple Breton sailor pressed by Tourville[4] for the fleet,
A poor coasting-pilot he, Hervé Riel the Croisickese.[5]

VI.

And "What mockery or malice have we here?" cries Hervé Riel:
"Are you mad, you Malouins?[6] Are you cowards, fools, or rogues?
Talk to me of rocks and shoals, me who took the soundings, tell
On my fingers every bank, every shallow, every swell
'Twixt the offing[7] here and Grève[8] where the river disembogues?[9]
Are you bought by English gold? Is it love the lying's for?
Morn and eve, night and day,
Have I piloted your bay,
Entered free and anchored fast at the foot of Solidor.[10]
Burn the fleet and ruin France? That were worse than fifty Hogues!
Sirs, they know I speak the truth! Sirs, believe me there's a way!
Only let me lead the line,
Have the biggest ship to steer,
Get this 'Formidable' clear,
Make the others follow mine,
And I lead them, most and least, by a passage I know well,

4. **pressed by Tourville.** Pressed into service by Count Tourville the commander of the French fleet.

5. **Croisickese.** A native of La Croisic, a small seaport at the mouth of the Loire. Browning was living here when he wrote this poem.

6. **Malouins.** People of St. Malo.

7. **the offing.** The deeper water lying off from the shore.

8. **Greve.** The sandy shore east of St. Malo.

9. **disembogues.** Discharges, empties.

10. **Solidor.** One of the forts.

Right to Solidor past Grève,
And there lay them safe and sound;
And if one ship misbehave,
—Keel so much as grate the ground,
Why, I've nothing but my life,—here's my head!" cries
Hervé Riel.

VII.

Not a minute more to wait,
"Steer us in, then, small and great!
Take the helm, lead the line, save the squadron!" cried
its chief.
Captains, give the sailor place!
He is Admiral, in brief.
Still the north-wind, by God's grace!
See the noble fellow's face
As the big ship, with a bound,
Clears the entry like a hound,
Keeps the passage as its inch of way were the wide sea's
profound!
See, safe thro' shoal and rock,
How they follow in a flock,
Not a ship that misbehaves, not a keel that grates the
ground,
Not a spar that comes to grief!
The peril, see, is past,
All are harboured to the last,
And just as Hervé Riel hollas "Anchor!"—sure as fate,
Up the English come too late!

VIII.

So, the storm subsides to calm:
They see the green trees wave
On the heights o'erlooking Grève.
Hearts that bled are stanched with balm.

"Just our rapture to enhance,
Let the English rake the bay,
Gnash their teeth and glare askance
As they cannonade away!
'Neath rampired[11] Solidor pleasant riding on the Rance!"
How hope succeeds despair on each Captain's countenance!
Out burst all with one accord,
"This is Paradise for Hell!
Let France, let France's King
Thank the man that did the thing!"
What a shout, and all one word,
"Hervé Riel!"
As he stepped in front once more,
Not a sympton of surprise
In the frank blue Breton eyes,
Just the same man as before,

IX.

Then said Damfreville, "My friend,
I must speak out at the end,
Though I find the speaking hard.
Praise is deeper than the lips:
You have saved the King his ships,
You must name your own reward.
'Faith, our sun was near eclipse!
Demand what'er you will,
France remains your debtor still.
Ask to heart's content and have! or my name's not
Damfreville."

X.

Then a beam of fun outbroke
On the bearded mouth that spoke,
As the honest heart laughed through

11. **rampired.** Surrounded by ramparts.

Those frank eyes of Breton blue:
"Since I needs must say my say,
Since on board the duty's done,
And from Malo Roads to Croisic Point, what is it but a run?—
Since 'tis ask and have, I may—
Since the others go ashore—
Come! A good whole holiday!
Leave to go and see my wife, whom I call the Belle Aurore!"
That he asked and that he got,—nothing more.[12]

XI.

Name and deed alike are lost:
Not a pillar nor a post
In his Croisic keeps alive the feat as it befell;
Not a head[13] in white and black
On a single fishing-smack,
In memory of the man but for whom had gone to wrack
All that France saved from the fight whence England bore the bell.[14]
Go to Paris: rank on rank
Search the heroes flung pell-mell
On the Louvre, face and flank![15]
You shall look long enough ere you come to Hervé Riel.
So, for better and for worse,
Hervé Riel, accept my verse!
In my verse, Hervé Riel, do thou once more
Save the squadron, honour France, love thy wife, the Belle Aurore!

—*Browning,*

(*By arrangement with the Publishers, Smith, Elder & Co., London, England*).

12. **nothing more.** This is not strictly accurate. Riel asked and was granted freedom from service for the rest of his life.
13. A figure-head placed at the prow of a vessel.
14. **bore the bell.** Carried off the prize; won the victory.
15. **On the Louvre.** The Louvre is a famous gallery of painting and sculpture in Paris. On the front and sides (face and flank) of the outside walls there are rows of statues of famous men.

THE SKELETON IN ARMOUR

Of *The Skeleton in Armour*, Longfellow wrote:—"This ballad was suggested to me while riding on the seashore at Newport (Rhode Island). A year or two previous, a skeleton had been dug up at Fall River (Mass.), clad in broken and corroded armour; and the idea occurred to me of connecting it with the Round Tower at Newport, generally known hitherto as the Old Windmill, though now claimed by the Danes as a work of their early ancestors."

In the tenth and eleventh centuries, Norse sea-rovers had established small settlements in Greenland and had pushed as far south as the New England coast. There is, however, no evidence that either the Skeleton in Armour or the Round Tower at Newport were in any way associated with the visits of the Northmen. The Round Tower or Old Windmill, was probably built about 1675.

"Speak! speak! thou fearful guest!
Who, with thy hollow breast
Still in rude armour drest,
Comest to daunt me!
Wrapt not in Eastern balms,
But with thy fleshless palms
Stretched, as if asking alms,
Why dost thou haunt me?"

Then, from those cavernous eyes
Pale flashes seemed to rise,
As when the Northern skies
Gleam in December;
And, like the water's flow
Under December's snow,
Came a dull voice of woe
From the heart's chamber.

"I was a Viking[1] old!
My deeds, though manifold,
No Skald[2] in song has told,
No Saga[3] taught thee!
Take heed, that in thy verse
Thou dost the tale rehearse,
Else dread a dead man's curse;
For this I sought thee.

1. **Viking.** A Norse sea-pirate.
2. **Skald.** Bard, or poet.
3. **Saga.** Ancient Norwegian legend.

"Far in the Northern Land,
By the wild Baltic's strand,
I, with my childish hand,
Tamed the gerfalcon;[4]
And, with my skates fast-bound,
Skimmed the half-frozen Sound,
That the poor whimpering hound
Trembled to walk on.

"Oft to his frozen lair
Tracked I the grisly bear,
While from my path the hare
Fled like a shadow;
Oft through the forest dark
Followed the were-wolf's[5] bark,
Until the soaring lark
Sang from the meadow.

"But when I older grew
Joining a corsair's[6] crew,
O'er the dark sea I flew
With the marauders.
Wild was the life we led;
Many the souls that sped,
Many the hearts that bled,
By our stern orders.

"Many a wassail-bout[7]
Wore the long Winter out;
Often our midnight shout
Set the cocks crowing,
As we the Berserk's[8] tale
Measured in cups of ale,
Draining the oaken pail,
Filled to o'erflowing.

4. **gerfalcon.** A large falcon of the Arctic regions.
5. **were-wolf.** A man who had assumed the form of a wolf.
6. **corsair.** Pirate.
7. **wassail-bout.** A carousal. Wassail is spiced ale.
8. **Berserk.** A legendary Norse hero of the eighth century.

"Once as I told in glee
Tales of the stormy sea,
Soft eyes did gaze on me,
Burning yet tender;
And as the white stars shine
On the dark Norway pine,
On that dark heart of mine
Fell their soft splendour.

"I wooed the blue-eyed maid,
Yielding, yet half afraid,
And in the forest's shade
Our vows were plighted.
Under its loosened vest
Fluttered her little breast,
Like birds within their nest
By the hawk frighted.

"Bright in her father's hall
Shields gleamed upon the wall,
Loud sang the minstrels all,
Chaunting his glory;
When of old Hildebrand
I asked his daughter's hand,
Mute did the minstrels stand
To hear my story.

"While the brown ale he quaffed,
Loud then the champion laughed,
And as the wind-gusts waft
The sea-foam brightly,
So the loud laugh of scorn,
Out of those lips unshorn,
From the deep drinking horn
Blew the foam lightly.

"She was a Prince's child
I but a Viking wild,
And though she blushed and smiled,
I was discarded!
Should not the dove so white
Follow the sea-mew's flight,
Why did they leave that night
Her nest unguarded?[9]

"Scarce had I put to sea,
Bearing the maid with me,—
Fairest of all was she
Among the Norsemen!—
When on the white sea-strand,
Waving his armèd hand
Saw we old Hildebrand,
With twenty horsemen.

"Then launched they to the blast,
Bent like a reed each mast,
Yet we were gaining fast,
When the wind failed us;
And with a sudden flaw[10]
Came round the gusty Skaw,[11]
So that our foe we saw
Laugh as he hailed us.

"And as to catch the gale
Round veered the flapping sail,
Death! was the helmsman's hail,
Death without quarter!

9. If they did not wish the dove to follow the sea-gull (sea mew) they should not have left her nest unguarded.

10. **flaw.** Gust.

11. **Skaw.** A cape on the north of Jutland, in Denmark.

Mid-ships with iron keel
Struck we her ribs of steel;
Down her black hulk did reel
Through the black water!

"As with his wings aslant,
Sails the fierce cormorant,
Seeking some rocky haunt,
With his prey laden,
So toward the open main,
Beating to sea again,
Through the wild hurricane
Bore I the maiden.

"Three weeks we westward bore
And when the storm was o'er,
Cloud-like we saw the shore
Stretching to lee-ward;
There for my lady's bower
Built I the lofty tower,
Which, to this very hour,
Stands looking seaward.

"There lived we many years;
Time dried the maiden's tears;
She had forgot her fears,
She was a mother;
Death closed her mild blue eyes,
Under that tower she lies;
Ne'er shall the sun arise
On such another!

"Still grew my bosom then,
Still as a stagnant fen!
Hateful to me were men,
The sunlight hateful!
In the vast forest here,
Clad in my warlike gear,
Fell I upon my spear,
O, death was grateful!

"Thus, seamed with many scars
Bursting these prison bars,
Up to its native stars
My soul ascended!
There from the flowing bowl
Deep drinks the warrior's soul,
Skoal! to the Northland! *skoal!*" [12]
—Thus the tale ended.

—*Longfellow.*

12. **skoal.** Hail!

BOOT AND SADDLE.

"Boot and Saddle" is one of a series of three "Cavalier Tunes" written by Browning, representing different stages in the Civil War in the reign of Charles I. The story of "Boot and Saddle" belongs to the later stage of the war, when the Cavaliers were hard pressed by the Roundheads. The Cavalier who is represented as speaking has learned that his castle forty miles away is besieged by the Roundheads, and he determines to make the attempt to rescue it.

I.

Boot, saddle, to horse, and away!
Rescue my Castle, before the hot day
Brightens to blue from its silvery grey,
(Cho.) "Boot, saddle, to horse, and away!"

II.

Ride past the suburbs, asleep as you'd say;
Many's the friend there, will listen and pray
"God's luck to gallants that strike up the lay,
(Cho.) "Boot, saddle, to horse, and away!"

III.

Forty miles off, like a roebuck at bay,
Flouts Castle Brancepeth[1] the Roundheads' array:
Who laughs,[3] "Good fellows, ere this, by my fay,[2]
(Cho.) "Boot, saddle, to horse, and away!"

IV.

Who? My wife Gertrude; that, honest and gay,
Laughs when you talk of surrendering, "Nay!
"I've better counsellors;[4] what counsel they?
(Cho.) "Boot, saddle, to horse, and away!"

—*Browning.*

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1. Castle Brancepeth mocks the army of the Roundheads who are besieging it. There is a castle named Brancepeth near Durham, but it is not likely that Browning had any particular castle in mind.

2. **by my fay.** By my faith.

3. **laughs,** etc. Says laughingly, "Good fellows, by this time my husband is riding to our rescue."

4. **better counsellors.** Her own thoughts counsel her not to surrender.

ROBIN HOOD AND ALLEN-A-DALE.

Robin Hood was a legendary hero of the twelfth century who with a company of merry companions lived in Sherwood Forest in Nottinghamshire. They were famous outlaws and robbers, but according to tradition, they preyed only on the rich and were always ready to help those who were needy or in distress. Robin Hood was a popular hero of the old ballads, and many stories were told of his exploits and especially of his skill in archery; and in May Day celebrations where they were personated, Robin Hood and his band were always favourites in the sports. Among the members of his band were' Maid Marian, Friar Tuck, Little John, Scathlock, and Much, the miller's son

Come listen to me, you gallants so free,
All you that love mirth for to hear,
And I will tell you of a bold outlaw,
That lived in Nottinghamshire.

As Robin Hood in the forest stood,
All under the green-wood tree,
There was he aware of a brave young man,
As fine as fine could be.

The youngster was clothed in scarlet red,
In scarlet fine and gay;
And he did frisk it over the plain,
And chaunted a round-de-lay.

As Robin Hood next morning stood
Amongst the leaves so gay,
There did he 'spy the same young man
Come drooping along the way.

The scarlet he wore the day before,
It was clean cast away;
And at every step he fetch'd a sigh,
'Alack and a-well-a-day!'

Then step'd forth brave Little John,[1]
And Midge[2] the miller's son,
Which made the young man bend his bow,
When as he see them come.

'Stand off, stand off,' the young man said,
'What is your will with me?
'You must come before our master straight,
Under yon green-wood tree.'

And when he came bold Robin before,
Robin ask'd him courteously,
'O, hast thou any money to spare
For my merry men and me?'

'I have no money,' the young man said,
'But five shillings and a ring;
And that I have kept this seven long years,
To have it at my wedding.

Yesterday I should have married a maid,
But she soon from me was ta'en,
And chosen to be an old knight's delight,
Whereby my poor heart is slain.'[3]

'What is thy name?' then said Robin Hood,
'Come tell me without any fail.'
'By the faith of my body,' then said the young man,
'My name it is Allen-a-Dale.'

'What wilt thou give me,' said Robin Hood,
'In ready gold, or fee,
To help thee to thy true love again,
And deliver her up to thee?'

1. **Little John.** John Little, the most famous member of Robin Hood's band, was a giant in stature and strength, and there is a touch of humour in the transposition of his name.

2. **Midge.** "Much" is the usual spelling of the name.

3. **slain.** Broken.

'I have no money,' then quoth the young man,
'No ready gold or fee;
But I will swear upon a book,
Thy true servant to be.'

'How many miles is it to thy true love?
Come tell me without any guile.'
'By the faith of my body,' then said the young man
'It is but five little mile.'

Then Robin he hasted over the plain,
He did neither stint or lin,[4]
Until he came unto the church
Where Allen should keep his wedding.

'What hast thou here,' the bishop then said,
'I prithee now tell unto me?'
'I am a bold harper,' quoth Robin Hood,
'And the best in the north country.'

'O welcome, O welcome,' the bishop then said;
'That music best pleaseth me.'
'You shall have no music,' quoth Robin Hood,
'Till the bride and the bridegroom I see.'

With that came in a wealthy knight,
Which was both grave and old;
And after him a finikin[5] lass
Did shine like the glittering gold.

'This is not a fit match' quoth bold Robin Hood,
'That you do seem to make here;
For since we are come unto the church,
The bride shall choose her own dear.'

4. **stint nor lin.** Stay nor stop.
5. **finikin.** Fine; handsomely dressed.

Then Robin Hood put his horn to his mouth,
And blew out blasts two or three:
Then four and twenty bowmen bold
Come leaping over the lee;

And when they came into the church-yard,
Marching all on a row,
The first man was Allen-a-Dale,
To give bold Robin his bow.

'This is thy true love,' Robin he said,
'Young Allen, as I hear say;
And you shall be married at the same time,
Before we depart away.'

'That shall not be,' the bishop he said,
'For thy word shall not stand;
They shall be three times ask'd in the church,[6]
As the law is of our land.'

Robin Hood pull'd off the bishop's coat,
And put it upon Little John:
'By the faith of my body,' then Robin he said,
'This cloth doth make thee a man'.[7]

When Little John went to the choir,[8]
The people began to laugh;
He ask'd them seven times in the church,
Least three times should not be enough.

6. **three times asked in the church.** A reference to the asking of the banns, that is, the formal announcement of an intended marriage, three times in the church. Formerly this was required before the marriage ceremony could be performed.

7. **doth make thee a man.** Makes you look very fine.

8. **choir.** The chancel of the church; the place set apart for the singers.

'Who gives this maid?' said Little John.
Quoth Robin Hood, 'That do I;
And he that takes her from Allen-a-Dale,
Full dearly shall her buy.'

And thus having ended this merry wedding,
The bride she look'd like a queen;
And so they return'd to the merry green wood,
Amongst the leaves so green.

CHEVY-CHASE.

This poem should be used for reading only, not for memorization or spelling.

The ballad of Chevy Chase tells a story which has to do with the feuds between the English and the Scotch in the border country in the latter part of the fourteenth and the beginning of the fifteenth century. There is no record to show whether the main incident of the story is historical or not; and it is of little use to try to fit the details of the story into the actual history of the period. The writer of the ballad seems to have had in mind some of the incidents of the battle of Otterbourne which took place between the English and the Scotch in 1388. In this battle James, Earl of Douglas, was killed, and Henry Percy (Hotspur) was taken prisoner. It was followed fourteen years later (1402) by the battle of Homildon Hill, which is mentioned in the ballad. But the ballad writer places the story in the reign of 'Henry', probably Henry VI of England, and "James", probably James I of Scotland, some fifteen or twenty years later; and he represents Percy, Earl of Northumberland, as being killed in the fight. This latter detail is purely fictitious. As a matter of fact, however, the reader does not need to care whether the incidents of the ballad are historical or not. It is a stirring story of stirring times. "I never heard the old song of Percy and Douglas said Sir Philip Sidney, "that I found not my heart more moved than with a trumpet."

There are several versions of the ballad of Chevy Chase, and the one that follows, which is generally regarded as the best, is supposed to have been written as late as the reign of Queen Elizabeth.

GOD prosper long our noble king,
Our lives and safetyes all;
A woefull hunting once there did
In Chevy-Chace[1] befall;

---

1. **Chevy Chace.** The Cheviot hunting-ground (chase or chace). It is supposed that the name was originally a corruption of a French word, *chevauchée*, meaning "a raid" and that because of its resemblance in sound to "Cheviot Chase" it took on its present meaning.

To drive the deere with hound and horne,
Erle Percy[2] took his way;
The child may rue that is unborne,
The hunting of that day.

The stout Erle of Northumberland
A vow to God did make,
His pleasure in the Scottish woods
Three summers days to take;

The cheefest harts in Chevy-Chace
To kill and beare away.
These tydings to Erle Douglas[3] came,
In Scottland where he lay:

Who sent Erle Percy present word,
He wold prevent his sport.
The English Erle, not fearing that,
Did to the woods resort

With fifteen hundred bow-men bold;
All chosen men of might,
Who knew full well in time of neede
To ayme their shafts arright.

---

2. **Earl Percy.** This cannot be Henry Percy (Hotspur) the hero of the battle of Otterbourne, for he was not Earl of Northumberland. Henry Percy (1394-1455) the son of Hotspur, was the second Earl of Northumberland, and he lived during the reigns of Henry VI of England and James I of Scotland; but his death did not take place as recorded in the ballad. He is said to have been killed in the battle of St. Albans (1455).

3. **Earl Douglas.** It was James, Earl of Douglas, who was killed at the battle of Otterbourne. It is possible that the Douglas mentioned in the ballad was William Douglas, Earl of Angus (1398-1437), who is said to have come into conflict with the Percies.

The gallant greyhounds swiftly ran,
To chase the fallow deere;[4]
On munday they began to hunt,
Ere daylight did appeare;

And long before high noone they had
An hundred fat buckes slaine;
Then having dined, the drovyers went
To rouze the deare againe.

The bow-men mustered on the hills,
Well able to endure;
Theire rear sides all, with speciall care,
That day were guarded sure.

The hounds ran swiftly through the woods,
The nimble deere to take,
That with their cryes the hills and dales
An eccho shrill did make.

Lord Percy to the quarry[5] went,
To view the slaughter'd deere;
Quoth he, Erle Douglas promised
This day to meet me heere:

But if I thought he wold not come,
Noe longer wold I stay.
With that, a brave younge gentleman
Thus to the Erle did say:

Loe, yonder doth Erle Douglas come,
His men in armour bright;
Full twenty hundred Scottish speres
All marching in our sight;

4. **fallow deer.** A European species of deer, so called from its brownish-bay (fallow) colour.

5. **quarry.** A heap of slaughtered game.

All men of pleasant Tivydale,[6]
Fast by the river Tweede:[7]
O cease your sports, Erle Percy said,
And take your bowes with speede:

And now with me my countrymen,
Your courage forth advance;
For there was never champion yett,
In Scotland or in France,

That ever did on horsebacke come,
But if my hap[8] it were,
I durst encounter man for man,
With him to break a spere.

Erle Douglas on his milke-white steede
Most like a baron bold,
Rode foremost of his company,
Whose armour shone like gold.

Show me, sayd hee, whose men you bee,
That hunt soe boldly heere,
That, without my consent, doe chase
And kill my fallow-deere.

The first man that did answer make,
Was noble Percy hee;
Who sayd, Wee list[9] not to declare,
Nor shew whose men wee bee:

---

6. **Tivydale.** Teviotdale, the country watered by the river Teviot, which flows into the Tweed. The name Teviotdale is sometimes given to Roxburghshire.

7. **Tweed.** A river which separates Northumberland in England from Roxburghshire in Scotland.

8. **my hap.** My fortune.

9. **list.** Wish, please.

Yet wee will spend our deerest blood,
Thy cheefest harts to slay.
Then Douglas swore a solempne[10] oathe,
And thus in rage did say,

Ere thus I will out-braved[11] bee,
One of us two shall dye:
I know thee well, an erle thou art;
Lord Percy, soe am I.

But trust me, Percy, pittye it were,
And great offence to kill
Any of these our guiltlesse men,
For they have done no ill.

Let thou and I the battell tyre,
And set our men aside.
Accurst bee he, Erle Percy sayd,
By whome this is denyed.

Then stept a gallant squier forth,
Witherington was his name,
Who said I wold not have it told
To Henry[12] our king for shame,

That ere[13] my captaine fought on foote,
And I stood looking on.
You bee two erles, sayd Witherington,
And I a squier alone;

10. **solempne.** Solemn.
11. **outbraved.** Defied.
12. **Henry.** Henry VI. (1422–1461).
13. **ere.** Ever.

Ile doe the best that doe I may,
While I have power to stand:
While I have power to weeld my sword,
Ile fight with hart and hand.

Our English archers bent their bowes,
Their harts were good and trew;
Att the first flight of arrowes sent,
Full four-score Scots they slew.

Yet bides Earl Douglas on the bent,[14]
As chieftain stout and good.
As valiant captain, all unmov'd,
The shock he firmly stood.

His host he parted had in three,
As leader ware[15] and try'd,
And soon his spearmen on their foes
Bare down on every side.

To drive the deere with hound and horne,[16]
Douglas bade on the bent;[17]
Two captaines moved with mickle might[18]
Their speres to shivers went.

Throughout the English archery
They dealt full many a wound:
But still our valiant Englishmen
All firmly kept their ground:

14. **the bent.** The field. A "bent" is a field covered with bent-grass, a stiff wiry grass.

15. **ware.** Watchful, wary.

16. Douglas now tried to drive the English before him as a hunter drives the deer.

17. **bade on the bent.** Remained on the field.

18. **mickle might.** Great strength.

And throwing strait[19] their bows a way,
They grasp'd their swords so bright:
And now sharp blows, a heavy shower,
On shields and helmets light.

They closed full fast on everye side,
Noe slacknes there was found;
And many a gallant gentleman
Lay gasping on the ground.

O Christ! it was a griefe to see,
And likewise for to heare,
The cries of men lying in their gore,
And scattered here and there.

At last these two stout erles did meet,
Like captaines of great might:
Like lyons wood,[20] they layd on lode,[21]
And made a cruell fight:

They fought untill they both did sweat,
With swords of tempered steele;
Until the blood, like drops of rain,
They trickling downe did feele.

Yeeld thee, Lord Percy, Douglas sayd;
In faith I will thee bringe,
Where thou shalt high advanced bee
By James our Scottish king:[22]

---

19. **strait.** Straightway, at once.
20. **wood.** Mad.
21. **lode.** Fiercely
22. **James.** James I of Scotland (1394–1437).

Thy ransome I will freely give,
And this report of thee,
Thou art the most couragious knight,
That ever I did see.

Noe, Douglas, quoth Erle Percy then,
Thy proffer I doe scorne;
I will not yeelde to any Scott,
That ever yett was borne.

With that, there came an arrow keene
Out of an English bow,
Which struck Erle Douglas to the heart,
A deepe and deadlye blow:

Who never spake more words than these,
Fight on, my merry men all;
For why, my life is at an end;
Lord Percy sees my fall.

Then leaving liffe,[23] Erle Percy tooke
The dead man by the hand;
And said, Erle Douglas, for thy life
Wold I had lost my land.

O Christ! my verry hart doth bleed
With sorrow for thy sake;
For sure, a more redoubted[24] knight
Mischance cold[25] never take.

A knight amongst the Scots there was,
Which saw Erle Douglas dye,
Who streight in wrath did vow revenge
Upon the Lord [redacted]: Pierce Eye

23. **liffe.** Life: That is, when Douglas was leaving life.
24. **redoubted.** Valiant, redoubtable.
25. **cold.** Could.

Sir Hugh Mountgomery was he call'd,
Who, with a spere most bright,
Well-mounted on a gallant steed,
Ran fiercely through the fight;

And past the English archers all,
Without all dread or feare;
And through Earl Percyes body then
He thrust his hatefull spere;

With such a vehement force and might
He did his body gore,
The staff ran through the other side
A large cloth-yard,[26] and more.

So thus did both these nobles dye,
Whose courage none could staine:
An English archer then perceiv'd
The noble erle was slaine;

He had a bow bent in his hand,
Made of a trusty tree;
An arrow of a cloth-yard long
Up to the head drew hee:

Against Sir Hugh Mountgomerye,
So right[27] the shaft he sett,
The grey goose-winge that was thereon,
In his harts bloode was wett.

This fight did last from breake of day,
Till setting of the sun;
For when they rung the evening-bell,[28]
The battel scarce was done.

26. **cloth-yard.** An old measure for cloth, twenty seven inches in length
27. **So right.** With such true aim.
28. **the evening-bell.** Either the Curfew bell, or the bell for evening prayer.

With stout[29] Erle Percy, there was slaine
Sir John of Egerton,
Sir Robert Ratcliff, and Sir John,
Sir James that bold barron:

And with Sir George and stout Sir James,
Both knights of good account,
Good Sir Ralph Raby there was slaine,
Whose prowesse did surmount.[30]

For Witherington needs must I wayle,[31]
As one in doleful dumpes,[32]
For when his leggs were smitten off,
He fought upon his stumpes.

And with Erle Douglas, there was slaine
Sir Hugh Mountgomerye,
Sir Charles Murray, that from the feeld
One foote wold never flee.

Sir Charles Murray, of Ratcliff, too,
His sisters sonne was hee;
Sir David Lamb, so well esteem'd,
Yet saved cold not bee.

And the Lord Maxwell in like case
Did with Erle Douglas dye:
Of twenty hundred Scottish speres,
Scarce fifty-five did flye.

---

29. **stout.** Brave.
30. Who excelled in skill and courage.
31. **wayle.** Bewail, lament.
32. As one laments who is sad at heart.

Of fifteen hundred Englishmen,
Went home but fifty-three ;
The rest were slaine in Chevy-Chase,
Under the greene woode tree.

Next day did many widowes come,
Their husbands to bewayle ;
They washt their wounds in brinish teares,
But all wold not prevayle.

Theyr bodyes, bathed in purple gore,
They bare with them away :
They kist them dead a thousand times,
Ere they were cladd in clay.[33]

The newes was brought to Eddenborrow,[34]
Where Scottlands king did raigne,
That brave Erle Douglas suddenlye
Was with an arrow slaine :

O heavy newes, King James did say,
Scottland may witnesse bee,
I have not any captaine more
Of such account as hee.

Like tydings to King Henry came,
Within as short a space,
That Percy of Northumberland
Was slaine in Chevy-Chase :

Now God be with him, said our king,
Sith it will noe better bee;[35]
I trust I have, within my realme,
Five hundred as good as hee :

33. **cladd in clay.** Buried.
34. **Eddenborrow.** Edinburgh.
35. Since there is no help for it.

Yett shall not Scotts nor Scotland say,
But I will vengeance take:
I'll be revenged on them all,
For brave Erle Percyes sake.

This vow full well the king perform'd
After, at Humbledowne;[36]
In one day, fifty knights were slayne,
With lords of great renowne:

And of the rest, of small account,
Did many thousands dye:
Thus endeth the hunting of Chevy-Chase,
Made by the Erle ~~Percy~~ Piere eyle

God save our king, and bless this land
With plentye, joy, and peace;
And grant henceforth, that foule debate[37]
'Twixt noblemen may cease.

36. **Humbledowne.** Homildon Hill, near Wooler, in Northumberland. The date of the battle was 1402.

37. **debate.** Quarrel.

HIST